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SUBJECT: BASEBALL LEGEND CAL RIPKEN JR SPREADS GOODWILL IN NICARAGUA THROUGH SPORTS

**1. SUMMARY:** State Department Public Diplomacy Envoy Cal Ripken, Jr. traveled to Nicaragua with fellow ex-Oriole and Nicaraguan native Dennis M

**2. CLINICS:** Cal Ripken, Jr., Dennis Martinez, and two Ripken Baseball coaches started out each morning in Granada and Managua by providing ins  
Ripken's goal in these coaching clinics was to give helpful tips on how to be a better coach for kids. He talked about the importance of encour  
The Ripken team and Martinez dedicated their afternoons to teaching 120 kids ages 7-12 in Granada and another 120 in Managua. Each young partic

To mark the beginning of each clinic, one of the Ripken instructors  
wielding a bullhorn pressed the siren button, and the kids charged  
the outfield to begin their warm-up exercises and stretches. The  
parents and local fans in the stadium stands exploded in laughter  
and applause, and the cheering and fun continued throughout each  
afternoon clinic. Ripken, Martinez, and Ripken Academy instructors  
gave the kids the experience of a lifetime while emphasizing the  
merits of hard work and dedication and being a good, upstanding  
citizen.

**3. QUICKBALL:** Part of Ripken's baseball mission is to grow baseball and its positive lessons around the world. With this in mind, Ripken reach

At the end of the clinic day in Granada, the delegation made a  
special visit to Villa Esperanza to see the destitute living  
conditions of the kids with whom he had played Quickball earlier in  
the day. In the warm and welcoming neighborhood filled with shack  
homes made of zinc and wood scraps, Ripken stood among a sea of  
little onlookers and accepted two baseballs that had been  
autographed by all the children on the neighborhood team. Ripken  
donated Quickball equipment to Empowerment International and also  
made a charitable donation that would help keep 20 children in  
school for the next year. He also delivered 100 pounds of school  
supplies for the children that had been donated by Spanish language  
students from Fallston High School in Maryland.

**4. PARTNERS:** Embassy Managua received excellent support from ECA on this program. Post would like to thank ECA for sending Ripken, his coaches

The Embassy also received support from a variety of generous, local  
organizations in order to help make this baseball program a success.  
A small private university known for its strong sports program,  
American College, helped with recruiting and selecting the program  
participants. Corporations such as PricewaterhouseCoopers,  
Wal-Mart, Pizza Hut, and KPMG played an important role by  
volunteering to provide snacks and drinks to the coaches and  
children. Other sponsors included: Major League Baseball which  
provided a working lunch with coaches; the Cocibolca Jockey Club  
which provided a safe, free venue for the Granada morning clinics;  
and an American-run real estate company, Hunter Blair, which  
volunteered excellent interpreters to help the visiting American  
coaches.

**5. PRESS COVERAGE:** Ripken is probably best known for breaking Lou Gehrig's record for consecutive games played. However, during his week in Ni

Public Affairs hosted a press conference at the Embassy with  
national sports reporters upon Cal Ripken's arrival. Ambassador  
Robert J. Callahan, Dennis Martinez and Jorge Ayestas, Executive  
Director of American College, also attended. The event was well  
covered by all major national media.

Each afternoon in Granada and Managua, Ripken and Martinez also held a press conference at the ball fields with local reporters. Ambassador Cal

Editors of the most prominent radio, print and TV sports news  
programs were in attendance at the Ambassador's welcome reception  
for Ripken on November 13. In addition, a lucky sports reporter  
from a local cable television station and two prominent sports  
reporters from the nation's leading dailies, La Prensa and El Nuevo  
Diario, were invited to attend a small barbecue that the Ambassador  
held on November 16 in honor of Ripken's visit.

**6. RESULTS:** Whether a baseball fan or not, anyone who had the  
opportunity to spend a few days in close contact with Ripken would  
agree, he is not only a great ball player, but a great human being.  
Throughout all of the public events and press questions put to  
Ripken, he consistently referred to the values of hard work and  
dedication that baseball can foster in youth. He was extremely  
humble about his career, always stating that he played for the love  
of the game, never for any record or recognitions. Martinez was  
equally impressive. Ripken and his former teammate Martinez brought  
the best of baseball and America to Nicaragua.

Ripken's baseball tour in Nicaragua was remarkably unblemished by  
the surrounding Nicaraguan election results and violence which  
ultimately prevented a Leon clinic day. Instead, Ripken's batting  
for the U.S. Government produced a tremendous amount of American  
goodwill among Nicaraguan citizens from all walks of life.

Overall, 60 youth league coaches and 300 kids aged 7-12 in Granada  
and Managua received baseball clinics from Ripken and Martinez.  
Millions more Nicaraguans benefited from the positive and uplifting  
messages left in the press by Ripken's news streak.

SANDERS